

The University of Chicago

THE BRITISH COLONIAL SYSTEM
AND THE QUESTION OF CHANGE
OF POLICY ON THE EVE OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
AUGUST, 1940

By
FREDERIC J. ERICSON

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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The Problem

Was there a change in British colonial policy at about 1763? Specifically, was there a trend away from the mercantile theory of empire and toward what occasionally has been called the "new imperialism"? There is little evidence that there was any intention to drop entirely the old mercantile colonial principles. Rather the question becomes one of emphasis: Were any of the older principles and methods subordinated to or coordinated with newer principles and methods? These questions will be studied in this essay in reference to the practice of the old colonial system and the "new" program of 1763 and after.

Two answers to the question of change of policy are suggestive. The emphasis is placed by one on the continuity of British colonial policy before the American Revolution. By the other, the features which show innovation in policy are stressed as most significant. There are many variations of these two major points of view. To some interpreters, the question of policy is of but minor importance. These feel that Britain retained her determination to govern the colonies and America developed a spirit of independence; apparent changes in policy and fluctuations in methods of control would therefore represent opportunism rather than fundamental changes. However, there was much contemporary controversy over proper colonial principles; this suggests that there may have been more than opportunism involved.

It is generally accepted that the old colonial regime was a component part of the mercantile system. The central doctrine of mercantilism was the belief that national prosperity and power could be secured by maintaining a self-sufficing and controlled economic order. In the mercantile ideal of a "perfect"¹ empire,

¹"Thoughts concerning the Colonys [1765?]," William

colonies were desired to complement the mother state, to relieve it of dependence on others, and to add to its resources for international competition. This ideal was well expressed by the pamphleteer who compared colonies to subordinate buildings of a mansion and satirically agreed to separate from them, saying, ". . . . let us take down these superfluous buildings, and we shall find every commodity under our own roof."¹

The old colonial system involved the theoretical supremacy of Britain and its parliament. In actual practice, however, a good deal of semi-autonomy was allowed the individual colony. It was principally by "commercial cords"² that Britain's somewhat ineffective colonial regime bound the colony to the empire. Over all the British-American connection there was cast the shadow of British lethargy--"salutary neglect" perhaps--which was, in itself, an important feature of the system. The practice of ruling colonies on the theory of dependence and the custom of semi-autonomy except in trade and war is summed up in the expression, "the old colonial system."

Many points of friction and demands for reform of the system arose before 1763. The desire for stronger control of colonial affairs projected itself into the years when Britain's victory over France gave her a much larger territory to administer. The "new" plans were characterized by a larger authority for the home government and the integration of all its agencies for control of the colonies. There was also the understandable desire to shift some of the expense to the colonials. Out of the friction which arose came the immediate occasion for the colonial revolt. Was the Revolution directed against time-honored grievances or against new impositions of Britain's authority after 1763? It is the assumption of this essay that the changed response to the stimuli of British rule was based upon the totality of the effects of colonial character, environment, and the political and economic experiences

L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan (hereafter referred to as "WLCL"), Shelburne Papers, XLVIII: 74-76, p. 74.

¹Some reasons for approving the Dean of Gloucester's plan (London: N. Conant, 1775), p. 32.

²[John Dickinson], The late regulations respecting the British colonies on the continent of America considered (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1765), p. 6.

of a century and a half as well as those of the final two decades. The "new measures of Britain after 1763 were important, at least, in stimulating or furnishing the occasion for the somewhat latent colonial potentialities for revolt. For this reason, the study of British colonial policy in the pre-war years is of interest.

The Issue in British Politics

The question of whether the increased activity of Britain in colonial affairs represented a change of policy was frequently discussed in the period 1763-76. In 1776, Samuel Estwick, asked regarding Britain's recent course: "Where does all this bottom?"¹ In general there were two positions on the problem of policy. The belief that a change was under way was held by those who favored the American contention--the merchants, the Rockingham Whigs, and the colonists themselves. These groups often accused Britain of making "unhappy innovations" and of introducing a "new Colony system." Government officials, the army, landed interests, the political groups in control during most of this period, and the colonial Loyalists answered this charge by insisting that Britain was simply enforcing her time-honored policy.

The American question was a subordinate issue in the shifting sands of eighteenth century British politics. There was also a divergence between economic interests over colonial policy. That the merchants were generally pro-colonial seems unquestionable. There is hardly a shred of evidence that governmental spokesmen even claimed to have their support. The official spleen was rather poured forth on the "mercantile abettors"² of America. The merchant was unenlightened about national policy, he was frightened into supporting the Americans by their boycotts, he was looking at his short-run interests; but that he was in favor of the policies of 1763-76 was not contended. The shallowness of these explanations of his opposition to the government's policy is shown by the many efforts to induce him to change sides. It is also shown by the great stature in statesmanship which he at once attained in

¹A letter to the Reverend Josiah Tucker, D. D. Dean of Gloucester By Samuel Estwick, LL. D. Assistant Agent for the Island of Barbadoes (London: J. Almon, 1776), p. 99.

²[James Macpherson], The rights of Great Britain asserted against the claims of America (London, 1776), pp. 81 f.

pro-governmental pamphlets if he signed an address approving the official policy.

The British opposition, especially by the merchants, to what was regarded as an unwise policy did not await the riotous reception given the Stamp Act in America before it discovered itself. Rather, it appeared early in the Grenville period. It was the opposition of colonial agents and their British political and economic friends¹ which postponed the stamp tax for a year in 1764. Grenville gave grudging consent to the delay; despite the warnings by his friends that the taxation program would be "a striking alteration to ignorant people, and an unanswerable argument ad homines,"² he pursued his objective during the following year.

The legend that there was almost no British opposition to the Stamp Act in early 1765 was unfounded in fact. Contemporary statements about "only two or three members" speaking against the bill, a "languid debate," a "slight day" on American taxes, and a misconstrued comparison to a hotly contested turnpike bill³ have been misinterpreted. At most they cannot cover the story of committee meetings, articles and memorials, and other forms of propaganda against the Act. The self-justifying statement by one side that it met with no opposition and the contention by the other side that it had not encouraged colonial disobedience should not be taken too seriously. It is true that there was no serious British opposition to the constitutionality of the tax. Nor was there a Whig Opposition able or willing to oppose a measure which might further divide its feeble forces. Neither colonial agents nor British merchants and politicians used the pressure tactics which the colonists were to employ after they heard of the passage of the law. But, in the light of these limitations, the opposition which was made in 1764-65 was all that could be reasonably expected.

¹Credit for securing the postponement was accorded, variously, to Richard Jackson, Connecticut agent, Allen of Philadelphia, and the Boston-born John Huske. New-York Mercury, May 7, June 4, November 5, 1764.

²Earl of Mansfield to Grenville, December 24, 1764, The Grenville Papers . . ., ed. William James Smith (4 vols.; London: John Murray, 1852-53), II, 373.

³This refers to the Earl of Sandwich's turnpike bill which became, he said, "a mere party affair." Sandwich to Earl of Denbigh, March 18, 1765, Hist. MSS Com., Denbigh, V, 294.

From even lukewarm evidence, such as that of Jared Ingersoll, later stamp collector for Connecticut, the number who spoke against the Act must be enlarged to at least eight who are known by name.

Whether or not Grenville suppressed the colonial protests was of little moment on this score since all the arguments to be employed for years to come had been thoroughly aired in Britain before the Stamp Act was passed. This was so true that pro-governmental pamphleteers took the defensive, stated for rebuttal all the cardinal political and economic arguments which they conceded had been "lately flung out both in Papers and Conversation,"¹ and admitted colonial and British opposition. Some of the most penetrating criticisms of the policy of internal taxation were made at this time. An anonymous paper, perhaps by Sergeant Glyn, which was written before the American reaction to the passage of the Act could be known, said that internal taxation was "a new Measure and the Adoption and Avowal of a new principle" which the "Ancestors" had not even used in the case of Ireland.² The evidence of contemporary British as well as American opposition to the Stamp Act on grounds of principle tends to support the innovation theory contention that a significant change in colonial policy was being made.

The entente between merchants and Americans and the political friends of both continued in greater or lesser degree until the outbreak of the war. The colonists were politically too immature to keep the British merchants in good humor; there was also the necessity to treat the merchants as "seapoys"³ as an opponent sarcastically called them because it was only through them that more than an academic appreciation of the American position could be conveyed to the British people. For these reasons, it is surprising that so many British merchants remained aggressively hostile to the governmental program. The large amount of commercial

¹[Soame Jenyns], The objections to the taxation of our American colonies (2d ed.; London: J. Wilkie, 1765), p. 4. See also [George Grenville], The regulations lately made concerning the colonies (London, 1765) and [William Knox], The claim of the colonies examined (London: W. Johnson, 1765).

²["On the right and expediency of taxing America"] [1765], WLCL, Shelburne Papers, LXXXV: 71 ff., pp. 71, 71 v.

³[Allan Ramsay], Letters on the present disturbances in Great Britain and her American provinces (London [1775], reprinted, 1777), p. 36.

opposition accords with the view that British policy underwent changes which were of sufficient moment to alienate the class most interested in preserving the old colonial system.

The Continuity Theory of British Policy

What may be called the continuity viewpoint regarded British colonial policy as remaining unchanged until the outbreak of the American revolt. It was advanced by those who were interested in portraying the government as inaugurating no new engine of colonial control. The continuity theory did not deny that new circumstances arose about the middle of the eighteenth century; that the previous generation had enforced with laxity the principles of the colonial system simply proved the need for new stringency to repair the ravages of neglect.¹ It was admitted that the cry of "innovation" was made; but, it was answered, the quarrel with America did not "arise from any change whatever in our system of American government, but from a material alteration in the circumstances of the Colonies."²

The problems created by the British victory in 1763 necessarily demanded some variation in the application of Britain's old policy. Territory was acquired to protect the old colonies, to prevent more expensive wars, and to furnish Britain fur, naval stores, and other desired commodities. Alterations in the methods of control were not admitted as proof of a change in policy. When war with the colonies finally came, pro-governmental apologists insisted that it was a "gross and palpable falsehood, that the war is intended to introduce a new constitution into America."³ Any apparently new exertion of British power was represented as only the necessary assertion of rights which Americans--the true innovators--were for the first time questioning.

¹Dr. Samuel Johnson said that American disobedience was as poor a reason for giving the colonies up as finding oneself in a leaky ship would be for jumping into the sea. Taxation no tyranny (London: T. Cadell, 1775), p. 83.

²The plain question upon the present dispute with our American colonies (London: J. Wilkie, 1776), p. 22.

³[Dr. Blacklock], Remarks on the nature and extent of liberty (Edinburgh: Creech and T. Cadell; London, 1776), p. 53.

It was insisted that Britain sought to preserve and strengthen its time-honored commercial control over the colonies. Grenville, accused of innovations, said: "I discouraged no trade but what was illicit, what was prohibited by act of parliament."¹ It was repeatedly said that the "primary cause"² of colonial grievances was connected with the commercial system. In 1766, a pro-Grenville pamphlet said that the Stamp Act issue was

. . . . only a pretence or subterfuge. Bolt the matter to the brain, and you will find that the real grievance, the true and ultimate object of complaint, is, the Act of Navigation; and it is to rid themselves of this burden, that they are now in a state of revolt and rebellion.

Success against the Stamp Act would lead to an attack on the Navigation Act as the "very next step" it was declared.³ Dean Tucker also said that the "Real Grievances" of the colonists were caused by the "Revival of certain Restrictions laid upon their Trade:--I say, a Revival; for the same Restrictions have been the standing Rules of Government from the Beginning; though not enforced at all Times with equal Strictness"⁴ The natural conclusions to be drawn from such opinions were that Britain was threatened with the destruction of her commercial system and that her primary motive was to preserve it. This could hardly be pictured as an innovation in policy.

The innovation charge that direct taxation of colonies constituted a change of policy was met in either of two ways. Sometimes it was denied altogether. As Whately said, to "restore" the lost proportion of colonial contributions was "no more than maintaining the System, upon which we have always acted"⁵ On the other hand, it was sometimes admitted that the former "desuetude" of Britain's rights gave the "air of innovation" to their

¹Parliamentary History, XVI, 102.

²[James Anderson], Free thoughts on the American contest (Edinburgh, 1776), p. 2.

³A plain and seasonable address (London: Richardson and Urquhart, 1766), p. 9.

⁴Robert Livingston Schuyler (ed.), Josiah Tucker, A Selection from his Economic and Political Writings (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1931), pp. 321 f.

⁵[Thomas Whately], Considerations on the trade and finances of this kingdom (3d ed.; London: J. Wilkie, 1769), p. 156, misnumbered 136.

exertion.¹ This was coupled with the denial that there was any real change of principle. The reasons given by Britons for their prior indulgence were reported by Jared Ingersoll, February 11, 1765, to have been colonial "Infancy and Inability."² Somewhat facetiously, John Lind admitted that there had been a change in 1764 but added that the "great change was not in the policy of the mother-country, but in the strength and situation of the colonies."³ On the whole, it was insisted that taxation as exercised after 1763 was simply the proper and normal evolution of old principles and practices.

It was further contended that taxation was also consistent with the economic welfare of Britain. American aid was said to be necessary for the common defense of the empire; otherwise, all the vaunted trade with the colonies might be lost in war. To the anti-taxation argument that taking American money would disrupt the colonial economy since Britain already took the colonial "all," it was answered that smuggling and illicit trade disproved this premise.⁴ Besides, it was false to assume that colonial money would be transferred to Britain; this was implied in the question asked Franklin in his famous examination: "Don't you know that the money arising from the stamps was all to be laid out in America?"⁵ It was also shown that trade benefits were mutual and that colonial trade with Britain could not be considered equivalent to a tax; did not other nations pay British taxes in this way? As William Knox often concluded from such economic arguments, the exclusive trade with the colonies was "not then a sufficient compensation to Great Britain for undertaking the burden of defending the whole"⁶ The argument based on enlightened views--that specie trade balances were delusive and that a rich country like America

¹[Blacklock], op. cit. (1776), p. 44.

²[Letters on the Stamp-Act] (1766), p. 12.

³Remarks on the principal acts of the thirteenth parliament of Great Britain (London: Payne, 1775), I, 252 f.

⁴[Whately], op. cit. (1769), p. 143.

⁵The Writings of Benjamin Franklin, ed. Albert Henry Smyth (New York: Macmillan, 1906), IV, 415.

⁶WLCL, Knox Papers, II, fol. 21.

could pay taxes and thrive--was occasionally although not commonly used.¹

The continuity theory, therefore, insisted that the greater interest shown in colonial problems after 1763 represented no change in the concept that colonies were maintained by British authority for tangible returns. Such alterations as seemed to be made in British policy were really caused by changes in American circumstances, wealth, and conduct.² If a new situation convinced British statesmen of the necessity to tighten the reins, to enforce strenuously the old commercial code, to eliminate such abuses as the unreasonable independence of the assemblies, these steps would only show the tardy realization of the weakness of the imperial fabric and of the dangerous designs of the colonists. To demand a larger contribution from the colonists for the support of the empire would not be inconsistent with a system of exploitation of colonies. The preservation of the commercial connection was especially stressed. Various non-commercial details were added or abandoned as conditions changed; but commercial subordination remained the basic goal of the government. Those who held the continuity view recognized the new measures of Britain but subordinated them to the old policy; they minimized changes in practice when they admitted that they occurred. To picture Britain's efforts to preserve her colonial system as innovations they professed to regard as ridiculous.

Historians have often tended to interpret the pre-war policy of Britain in keeping with the continuity point of view. Two modern examples will illustrate this. The Beards say that "no principles essentially new, except the stamp tax, were applied to the colonies on the accession of King George, and the stamp tax was quickly abolished with his approval."³ Louis M. Hacker says

¹Dr. Roebuck and Matthew Boulton, in their Queries, published at Birmingham [Birmingham, 1775], p. 8, justified the taxation of colonies by asking: "Are Gold and Silver only wealth? Or are not rather fertile lands, industry, and commerce the most real wealth?"

²"Matters therefore were in their ordinary train, when the Americans stopt short, and would proceed no farther." [Adam Ferguson], Remarks on a pamphlet lately published by Dr. Price (London: T. Cadell, 1776), p. 24.

³Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, The Rise of American Civilization (New York: Macmillan, 1927), I, 205.

that the pre-Revolutionary years "can have no meaning unless we understand that the character of English imperial policy was never changed"¹ and that the years after 1763 rather saw the "intensification" of the mercantile policy.² No contemporary defender of Britain's course was more insistent on the unchanging nature of its policy.

The Innovation Theory of British Policy

The innovation point of view, which was held by those who wished to place the onus for changing standards upon the British government, contended that so many measures of Britain were contrary to the spirit and practice of the old colonial system that they could be described properly only as innovations. This theory insisted, as did the other, on the commercial nature of the old empire. Mercantilism was not discarded after 1763. The "new" regime claimed no intention to alter the fundamentals of economic control; but alterations in enforcement were made. However, it was insisted that economic control did not occupy the entire field of British policy in the years 1763-76; with the British, as with the Americans, it was taken for granted. The new problems were such that commercial solutions were inadequate; most of the new measures were only indirectly related to the time-honored methods of trade regulation. These were the problems of territorial expansion, changes in the old governments, maintenance of authority, and the desire for direct as well as indirect taxation.

From an extreme point of view, the acquisition of extended territory in 1763 represented a change in colonial ideals. William Burke complained that Britons had "either fought or negotiated" themselves out of their "commercial Character"³ and that the advocates of territorial expansion suggested a "System which if no[t] contrary to our national benefit, is at least contrary to all our former Ideas of it."⁴ However, this was not commonly maintained

¹"The First American Revolution," Columbia University Quarterly, XXVII (1935), 290.

²Ibid., p. 281.

³An examination of the commercial principles of the late negotiation between Great Britain and France in MDCCLXI (2d ed.; London: R. & J. Dodsley, 1762), p. 3.

⁴Ibid., pp. 6 f.

by critics of British policy. They rather made early and persistent claims that a change was under way in the general policy of the empire.

The most common characteristic of the frequent charges of a "new Colony system"¹ was that the old commercial connection with America was being vitiated by additions to it. The petitioning London merchants of 1775 requested Parliament to "enter into a full and immediate Examination of that System of commercial Policy" which was formerly maintained.² Richard Glover, in March, 1775, suggested the "looks" of the "venerable founders" of "such a system" if they could arise and "find it within the last ten years so roughly handled in a conflict with finance"³ The same implication was contained in the frequently expressed desires to "return again, and reestablish the system" in vogue before the "late innovations."⁴ Jonathan Shipley said that if Britons had any sense left, they would "return to the good old path we trod in so long"⁵ Adam Smith advised Wedderburn in 1778 that one possible course was "the restoration, or something near to the restoration, of the old system"⁶ Such a course was officially agreed to in the instructions to the Carlisle peace commission of 1778. The colonial demand to be restored to the conditions of 1763 ". . . . in general terms, must be agreed to at once" it was said.⁷ Unless the colonies would make grants, the taxation question was

¹Edmund Burke in his taxation speech of 1774, Parliamentary History, XVII, 1238.

²To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled [January 23, 1775] (facsimile petition in WLCL).

³The substance of the evidence [on West India planters' and merchants' petition] (London: H. S. Woodfall, [1775]), pp. 31 f.

⁴Thomas Pownal, May 15, 1767, Parliamentary History, XVI, 341.

⁵A speech intended to have been spoken on the bill for altering the charters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay (London: T. Cadell, 1774), p. 15.

⁶Paper endorsed in Wedderburn's hand: "Smiths thoughts on the State of the Contest w[ith] America. Feby. 1778," WLCL, Wedderburn Papers, III, fol. 2.

⁷Hist. MSS Com., Carlisle, p. 326.

to be allowed to "rest in oblivion" it was suggested in language worthy of Burke himself.¹

It was to be expected that Americans would cry that there had been a "sudden change of British policy"² after about 1763. Except for more vigor of statement and a larger catalogue of "innovations," they followed the same line of attack as did their British friends. As Joseph Reed wrote Dartmouth, October 24, 1774, the "universal claim of America is to be restored to the state of 1763."³

The details of the indictment of innovation may be considered in three general categories: Imperial control, commercial activity, and revenue taxation. It was frequently said that Britain was seeking to establish an "arbitrary power"⁴ over the Americans and that innovations were being made in the old colonial governments. Ex-Governor Pownall, for example, referred to the intended payment of colonial officials from the Townshend Act duties as a "moving of old boundaries."⁵ Changes in the government of Massachusetts in 1774 were said by the Opposition Lords to be the beginnings of "essential innovations into the government of this empire."⁶ None was more complete in listing a catalogue of changes than was Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, in connection with his "comparing two different methods of government."⁷ He said:

We certainly did wrong in taxing them We acted contrary to our own principles of liberty, and to the generous sentiments of our sovereign, when we desired to have the judges dependent on the crown for their stipends as well as their continuance. It was equally unwise to wish to make the governors independent of the people for their salaries.⁸

¹Ibid., p. 327.

²[William Bollan], The freedom of speech and writing upon public affairs (London: S. Baker, 1766), p. 140.

³Hist. MSS Com., Dartmouth, I, 336.

⁴[Joseph Priestly], An address to Protestant dissenters (London: Joseph Johnson, 1774), p. 15; Catherine Macaulay [Mrs. Graham], An address to the people of England, Scotland, and Ireland (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1775), p. 11.

⁵Parliamentary History, XVI, 613.

⁶Ibid., XVII, 1352.

⁷Op. cit. (1774), p. 15.

⁸Ibid., p. 17.

The change in Massachusetts government Shipley referred to as "this unheard of innovation."¹

In spite of their considerable vigor, British charges of innovation in the system of government were not as numerous or as insistent as those of the Americans. The colonials were quick to point out innovating characteristics in each step in what John Adams called the plan for "enslaving this country."² Dickinson made the classic attack on the Townshend civil list principle; the new taxes of 1767, he said, if used for the purposes specified, would "supersede that authority in our respective assemblies, which is essential to liberty."³ Jefferson said that Parliament's claim to intermeddle with civil government was "novel, and of a late date."⁴ When the Massachusetts government was altered, the prophecies of "new-modelling" were said to have been fulfilled, Samuel Adams rhetorically asking if the colonists would not regard "the model of Government prepar'd for us as a Sistem [sic] for the whole Continent."⁵

Opponents of British policy also considered it contradictory to the commercial policy and welfare of the empire. It was said that the very indulgences of the past had come to play their parts in British and colonial prosperity and that too hasty reform was worse than none at all. Grenville was especially ridiculed for restricting American trade and preventing the procurement of Spanish "Dollars" at just the time that his Stamp Act required more money from the colonists. Because his commercial regulations had the appearance of strengthening old mercantile policies, the attack developed the theory that "the very principle may be destroyed, by multiplying to excess the means of securing it."⁶

¹Ibid., p. 27.

²The Works of John Adams, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Little and Brown, 1851-54), IV, 18.

³The Writings of John Dickinson, ed. Paul Leicester Ford, Vol. I, Vol. XIV of Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1895), 364.

⁴The Works of Thomas Jefferson, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (New York: Putnam, 1904), II, 102.

⁵The Writings of Samuel Adams, ed. Henry Alonzo Cushing (New York: Putnam, 1907), III, 138.

⁶[Edmund Burke], Observations on a late state of the nation (2d ed.; London: J. Dodsley, 1769), p. 104.

To the pro-governmental plea that America's real purpose was free trade, it was replied that this was an imaginary danger and that it was Britain's own course which endangered rather than preserved the commercial connection with the colonies. Did not the colonists smuggle? No more than the Britons themselves. Burke said there was "not a creek" in Eastern Britain without its smugglers.¹ Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire, friend of Rockingham, testified in 1768 that a general opposition to the commercial laws was ". . . not known in this country eighteen months since; for although there has ever been smuggling, yet the country generally condemned it, and they would assist discoveries as to any other law . . . now exactly the reverse takes place."² Such an interpretation placed the blame for a change in colonial attitude squarely on the shoulders of the British government itself. Americans, likewise, stressed their desires to submit to "bona fide" commercial regulations.³ Jefferson testified to the difficulty in overcoming the colonial approval for Dickinson's "half-way house" of acceptance of commercial control coupled with resistance to revenue taxation.⁴ Franklin also frequently said that the colonists had petitioned about trade grievances and would continue to do so; but, in 1775, he still insisted that the features of the Navigation Act "which were of most Importance to Britain . . . were as acceptable to us as they could be to Britain"⁵ On the basis of such contentions, the innovation theory maintained that the defense of the commercial system was not the significant feature of British policy after 1763.

It was believed that conflicts in principle resulted from the revenue taxation program. Commercial policy condemned direct taxation of colonists; as Samuel Estwick said, "commercial

¹Taxation speech of 1774, Parliamentary History, XVII, 1237.

²Wentworth to Rockingham, November 13, 1768, Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham and his Contemporaries, ed. George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), II, 90.

³This was the position of the First Continental Congress. S. E. Morison, Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution, 1764-1788, and the formation of the Federal Constitution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 120.

⁴Works of Jefferson, I, 14.

⁵Writings of Franklin, VI, 331 f.

colonization by the very definition of the terms themselves, excludes the very idea of taxation"¹ The various taxation projects were hailed as "innovations." Of the Sugar Act duties, Burke said: "The duties were port duties, like those [the colonists] had been accustomed to bear, with this difference, that the title was not the same, the preamble not the same, and the spirit altogether unlike."² No less a witness than Governor Bernard agreed with the innovation interpretation of the Stamp Act; November 23, 1765, he wrote that "such an innovation as a Parliamentary taxation" was bound to cause alarm and referred to it as a great "novelty."³ The American contention that the old tariffs were essentially different from the Townshend Act duties was accepted by many British friends and some enemies. William Dowdeswell, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Rockingham, said that "port-duties laid for revenue only are in their nature the same as qualified stamp-acts."⁴ Because the 1767 duties taxed British exports, Lord North agreed that they were "preposterous."⁵

Americans felt with Samuel Adams that the exercise of the taxing power as in the Stamp Act "wholly cancels the very conditions upon which our ancestors settled this country"⁶ The stipulation of revenue in the Mutiny Act was also attacked. With the extension of the regulatory power into the field of taxation in 1767, Dickinson pronounced the colonial view that it was a "most dangerous innovation."⁷

Another phase of the argument against taxation which assumed that it was a change from the wise policy of the past was its denunciation as inconsistent with the economic welfare of Britain. It was said to be most unwise to irritate good customers, to induce

¹Op. cit. (1776), p. 92.

²Taxation speech of 1774, Parliamentary History, XVII, 1242.

³[Sir Francis] Bernard, Select letters on the trade and government of America (London: T. Payne, 1774), p. 30.

⁴Dowdeswell to Rockingham, August 14, 1768, WICL, Dowdeswell Papers.

⁵Parliamentary History, XVI, 853.

⁶Writings of Samuel Adams, I, 19.

⁷Writings of John Dickinson, I, 316.

them to manufacture for themselves, and thus to defeat the very ends of the colonial system. As Franklin said, ". . . what you get from us in Taxes you must lost in Trade. The Cat can yield but her skin."¹ Were not the Americans to bear their share of the imperial burdens? Indeed, it was answered, but they already bore their share by virtual taxation. The opponent of taxation of early 1765 implied that Britain "alone" should pay taxes in money for the colonists were under a "more grievous mode of Taxation" in the form of "commercial Restraints."² Rockingham developed the "virtual taxation" theory by saying: "If I tie my tenants to grind at the manor mill, I certainly raise money upon them virtually, for I let my mill the better for their being tied to be its customers."³

The over-emphasis on gold and silver which characterized many merchantilists led to another argument against direct taxation. Since the Americans had no mines, since they owed an annual balance to Britain, since they acquired the specie for this payment by trade with other nations and transmitted it to Britain, it was believed that the colonial "all" centered in Britain. For this reason, it was asked "how strangely impolitic" must it be to "re-mit a poor barren Sum into the Exchequer which would soon of itself have found its way to Great Brittain" in trade.⁴ Taxation policy was directly at odds with commercial policy in another way. Commercial policy tolerated the necessary minimum of colonial trade with foreigners for procuring the specie for an adverse trade balance; but to demand taxes also would be, as Mitchell said, "to force them into a trade with foreign Powers."⁵ Mercantilists, therefore, insisted that Britain should "reprimand" the colonists if they should "voluntarily" send their money to her⁶ or "beg" for an army of taxgatherers; it would be the "worst policy in the

¹Writings of Franklin, IV, 243.

²WLCL, Shelburne Papers, LXXXV: 71 ff., p. 76.

³Rockingham to Harrison, October 2, 1768, Memoirs of Rockingham, II, 81.

⁴WLCL, Shelburne Papers, LXXXV: 71 ff., pp. 74 v. and f.

⁵[John Mitchell], The present state of Great Britain and North America . . . (London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1767), p. 357.

⁶Ibid., p. 294.

world" to comply with such requests.¹ The contention of the apologists for taxation that the money would be spent in America was answered, by Franklin and others, with the counter-contention that it would be spent in the new colonies and from them remitted to Britain in trade.² An interesting admission by an early exponent of imperial taxation shows that the very "delusion" as to the nature of wealth led to disapproval of revenue taxation. It was said in 1763:

It may perhaps be objected [against taxation] that there is hardly any money in the Colonies, therefore it will be utterly impracticable for them to support an army; but such an objection can only proceed from the common, and I may say absurd delusion that gold and silver are the wealth of States. The truest wealth of a state is the products of the earth, and these are a revenue which renews itself annually³

It should be pointed out that the cry of "innovation" did not really involve a belief that old features of policy were being dropped entirely. The change which was decried was the addition by a process of accretion of new features to the old system. This is illustrated in connection with one of the major "innovations": direct taxation. Burke said that the Sugar Act revenue was "not substituted in the place of, but superadded to, a monopoly"⁴ This same thought was often expressed by the Americans in such complaints as that Britain expected them to make bricks without straw.⁵ They also implied it in their insistence that the old monopoly and the new revenue program together imposed "double contributions"⁶ or "intolerable Oppression."⁷

¹[Matthew Robinson-Morris, 3d Lord Rokeby], Considerations on the measures carrying on with respect to the British colonies in North-America (London; Hartford: reprinted, Eben. Watson, 1774), pp. 42, 44.

²Writings of Franklin, IV, 415.

³WLCL, Shelburne Papers, XLVIII: 525-42, p. 539.

⁴Taxation speech of 1774, Parliamentary History, XVII, 1241.

⁵Richard Bland, An inquiry into the rights of the British Colonies (1766), ed. Earl Gregg Swem (Richmond: Appeals Press, 1922), p. 26.

⁶Works of Jefferson, II, 104.

⁷Franklin to Galloway, January 9, 1769, WLCL, Franklin letters to Galloway, letter 10.

Did all the alleged innovations which have been mentioned constitute a change of colonial policy as a whole? The continuity theory answer was in the negative; there was a new awareness of the imperial problem and new efforts to solve it, but no new policy. The innovation theory, on the other hand, insisted that the many variations from past practice collectively indicated a change in general system. A stronger exertion of imperial authority, alterations in colonial governments, inconsistent tightening of commercial restraints at the same time that an unwise direct revenue program was inaugurated--these were all regarded as proof of innovation. While the innovation theory admitted the continuance of old features of policy, it placed special emphasis upon those which were new. Whether or not the new practices were consistent with old theories, the determination to exercise so many of them amounted to a change of policy.

Since the days of David Ramsay, some historians have tended to accept the innovation interpretation of British policy. Ramsay said that "Great-Britain changed the ancient system" of colonial control.¹ George Louis Beer said that "it was only when the fundamental basis of the acts [of Navigation] was changed from one of commercial monopoly to one of revenue, that the acts became of vital political importance."² Some of the most important statements of an innovation approach have been made by Charles M. Andrews. In his 1924 essays, he wrote: "To the old and well tried colonial policy of mercantilism was now to be added a new and untried policy of imperialism"³ Andrews has tended to qualify this position in his later writings. In his latest volume, he has written that after 1763 "policy underwent no change, but its enforcement was broadened out to meet the new conditions" and that "executive and legislative joined in the new attempt to carry out an old policy." However, that more than commercial policy was involved in these years is seen by his statement on the same page that the results of the Seven Years War "aroused an imperial

¹The History of the American Revolution (Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1789), I, 60.

²"The Commercial Policy of England toward the American Colonies," Columbia Studies in History, Economics and Public Laws, III (1893), 158.

³The Colonial Background of the American Revolution (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1924), p. 125.

interest where hitherto only mercantilist ideas had prevailed." Direct taxes were planned and this was something which parliament "had never attempted to do before."¹ Again, Andrews says that several new steps were taken which were "none of them mercantilist in their objectives."² Such views of historians represent acceptance of the theory that there was considerable innovation in colonial policy in the pre-Revolutionary years.

Aspects of British Colonial Policy, 1763-76

One method of approach to the question of the nature of British policy is to examine individual features of the colonial practice of 1763-76 in the light of the two principal theories. This will be done in connection with several aspects which have been associated with the belief in a change of policy.

Many leading historians have followed George Louis Beer in his belief that when Britain took territory of continental scope in 1763 rather than the rich sugar islands it signified a "turning point in British colonial policy" from the emphasis on the "supply" type of colonies to "markets."³ That there were two general lines of argument on the value of colonies is true. If a British thinker favored the continental acquisitions, he spoke, as did Shelburne in 1762, of its greater extent, its real and imaginary economic resources and possibilities, and its room for colonial expansion and increased commercial potentialities for Britain for "ages to come."⁴ The apologists for the peace said, in the 1762 debates, that "extent of territory and a number of subjects are matters of as much consideration to a state attentive to the sources of real grandeur, as the mere advantages of traffic"⁵ On the other hand, if one favored the West Indies, he emphasized the great importance of sugar and the inadequacy of British possessions to

¹The Colonial Period of American History (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1938), IV, 422.

²Ibid., p. 426 n.

³British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765 (New York: Macmillan, 1907), p. 139.

⁴H. W. V. Temperley in The Cambridge History of the British Empire (New York: Macmillan, 1929), I, 505, citing Shelburne Papers, CLXV.

⁵Parliamentary History, XV, 1272.

furnish it. He insisted that acquisitions in North America could be made with more moderation and still take care of any real need for territory and security; besides, he threw out the warning note that security from the French might be paralleled by insecurity from colonial discontent.

Such clearcut arguments would seem to indicate the existence of two well defined schools of thought. However, the leaders of opinion changed from one side to the other as the political winds changed. A sincere conviction that expanding markets were preferable was not absent. Once the North American acquisitions were determined upon, every available argument was used to make as good a case as possible for the choice which was made. But political considerations, indecision on the part of leading statesmen, propaganda, and ignorance, all played a part in the struggle between farm and forest and plantation colonies.

The factor which it is believed played the most decisive role in the final decision was the desire for security; this has been often neglected because of the attention given the conflict over the values of colonies.¹ Two types of security were desired: Colonial security against French and Indian wars and British security against the necessity to divert so much force from European fronts to a secondary but extensive battle area. This desire was not caused by imaginary dangers. Despite its victory, Britain could well view with alarm its paradoxical position in world affairs. Two old enemies, France and Spain, had recently proved their unity by common action. One old friend, Austria, was now a defeated enemy. A recent ally, Prussia, was a much disgruntled neighbor thanks to the futile diplomacy of Bute. British isolation was soon to be illustrated by the almost unbroken hostility of Europe during the American Revolution.

Statesmen and writers of both sides agreed that the strongest consideration urged for North American expansion was that of security. John Douglas, whose pamphlet opened the paper war over the question, demanded Canada as the "sine qua non" of peace although he admitted it was valueless from the economic standpoint and based his entire justification on the security

¹The English historian, L. B. Namier, makes an excellent statement of the security interpretation in his England in the Age of the American Revolution (London: Macmillan, 1930), I, 317-27.

factor.¹ William Burke, advocate of the West Indies, testified on the strength of the security argument:

This very groundless Opinion [of the need for colonial security] was the true Source of our Neglect in the late Negotiation [of real advantages] All from hence proceeded that utter Oblivion of all former Maxims of our Policy, whilst, under the Name of Security, we sought with Eagerness extensive and unprofitable Empire, and rejected moderate but lucrative Acquisition.²

Security was the consideration which was described by Franklin as of "principle Weight"³ and by Hardwicke, who favored the West Indies, as "the most material argument" for Canada.⁴ The defenders of the peace in the debates of 1762 referred to the removal of the French as the "most capital advantage we can obtain"⁵

The change made in 1763 was not a shift from mercantile to imperial standards of empire. It was rather a change in emphasis on old mercantile values. The old desire for security was given primary consideration; this, of necessity, involved preference for territory which could best be justified in the economic sense by the appeal to the markets aspect of the mercantile principles. But a moderate amount of territorial growth, the desire for security of colonies already acquired and the prevention of costly frontier wars, and the desire for export markets were surely parts of the mercantile ideal. That they were subordinate to the prime matter of a "perfect" staple for each colony and that the former prime consideration received less attention in 1763 is the most that can be said for the contention of change of policy in 1763. Therefore, the view that the Peace of 1763 signified a marked change from an older to a newer theory of the economic values of colonies seems untenable. Despite the shifting of emphasis and

¹[John Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury], A letter addressed to two great men, on the prospect of peace; and on the terms necessary to be insisted upon in the negotiation (2d issue of 1st ed.; London: Millar, 1760), pp. 29-34.

²Op. cit. (1762), p. 69.

³Franklin to John Hughes, January 7, 1760, Writings of Franklin, IV, 8.

⁴Namier, op. cit., I, 324, citing Add. MSS, 32936, ff. 310-11.

⁵Parliamentary History, XV, 1271.

the importance of the security factor, there was more continuity than innovation in the decision then made. This is not to say that the new territorial extension of 1763 did not have very significant effects on the trends of British policy from that time forward.

Somewhat parallel to the theme of territorial expansion is the related question of what degree of change of policy was represented in the hesitant encouragement which was given to colonial settlement after 1763. British policy makers were faced with the problem of whether to encourage liberal expansion to the Westward or to confine expanding colonial energies to the seacoast. It was along compromise lines that the Grenville-Bedford ministry allowed some colonial expansion. The older fear of colonies too remote from Britain was catered to by allowing expansion only along the coast; all the newly organized colonies were "accessible" and three were Southern. Fur and vested land interests were appeased in the limitation of Westward extension. The limitation of settlement in the Proclamation of 1763, however, was said to be "for the present";¹ this led Clarence W. Alvord, the leading authority on the subject, to think of the restriction policy as temporary. It is plausible to reason that the ministry of 1763 meant the Proclamation policy to be temporary and that it meant to encourage liberal expansion as soon as the Indians were pacified. But the theory is not proved in the light of evidence examined for this study. The alternative theory that British profession, official statement of policy, and intention agreed with what was actually done has much support in contemporary official papers. There was little hint of an official approval for liberal expansion West of the mountains although it was agreed that it was necessary to seize the old French posts in Illinois and elsewhere. The idea of limiting settlement at the Appalachians had been occasionally broached before the immediate necessity to placate the Indians in 1763.² "Perpetual"³ colonies were planned for Nova Scotia, the Floridas,

¹Clarence W. Alvord, The Genesis of the Proclamation of 1763 [read before the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, December 13, 1907], pp. 26, 29.

²Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, [The importance of attaching the Indian tribes to the English interest] [c. 1760], pp. 20-22.

³Report of Board of Trade, June 8, 1763, WLCL, Shelburne Papers, XLIX: 365-96, p. 381.

and in other "accessible" regions in papers associated with Shelburne. The latter did not justify his approval of the restriction policy with quite the strong expressions of anti-expansionist sentiments as were used by some; but he spoke for limitation nevertheless. All that was done before 1767 was generally in keeping with old mercantile standards of empire and was justified accordingly.

With 1767, Shelburne advanced to a more liberal encouragement of colonization. Even the arguments for this program used many of the old mercantile objectives as justifications. For whatever reason, the liberal program failed. To conclude that widespread colonial expansion was a part of the new policy of 1763 and that it marked a change of system seems dubious at best. Upon the whole, there seems to have been more continuity than innovation in this aspect of policy.

A better case for the theory of innovation can be made in connection with various efforts to strengthen British control of general imperial affairs. The colonies had failed so often in the management of these matters--defense, lands, and Indian relations--that it was determined to leave them in their hands no longer. Jared Ingersoll testified in 1765 that he had found Parliament and the nation "fix'd" in the opinion that America had

become too important to be left to that Kind of Care and Protection, that was exercised heretofore by each independent Province, in the Days of their Infancy;--That there must be some one Eye to see over and some One Hand to guide and direct, the Whole of it's Defence and Protection¹

A broad policy of detailed supervision was attempted; this included a stronger program for defense and an imperial bureaucracy for Indian trade as well as the political supervision of Indian affairs. The failure of the revenue program resulted in the partial abandonment of the more expensive features of the new system. Though control of Indian trade was restored to the colonies and military establishments in the West were reduced, there was no surrender of the theory. The authority of the mother country to supervise general affairs, in spite of the differences between expansionists and retractionists and their compromises, in spite of over-ambitious plans going shipwreck on the showals of finances, was a central thread which ran through this field of

¹[Letters on the Stamp-Act] (1766), p. 34.

imperial-colonial relations in these years. Such a control was, perhaps, consistent with the mercantile theory of the past; but it was not in keeping with the practice of the past half century at least. The determination really to apply so many features of imperial integration in this field represented a significant innovation.

There was, likewise, a growing determination to alter colonial governments. Strong expressions as to the faults of "democratic" and self-willed colonies had been made for a long time. After the Peace of 1763, it was generally recommended that: "Whatever Mistakes have been committed in the Settlement of the Old Colonies, ought carefully to be avoided in the New."¹ With colonial disobedience to British authority in 1765, the demands for what Governor Bernard called "new modelling the governments in America"² increased. Several attempts were made to discipline the assemblies. They were requisitioned to grant compensation for the Stamp Act riot sufferers. The New York Assembly was ordered suspended for refusing to vote a stipulated tax in connection with the Mutiny Act. An actual dissolution was carried out in Massachusetts for refusal to rescind the Circular Letter of 1768 at the order of Hillsborough. There were similar designs on other assemblies. Knox wrote Grenville, May 24, 1768, that Hillsborough had ordered the assemblies to be repeatedly dissolved if they agreed with Massachusetts and said: "The civil expense in the several colonies which by this proceeding may be left unprovided for, is to be defrayed out of the American revenue, and the Governors are directed to draw on the treasury for it."³

The new-modelling movement took a very significant step in the Townshend program to remedy one of the cardinal faults of the colonial system by establishing a civil list in connection with his new taxes. This was largely avoided only by colonial resistance to the payment of the new duties. Continued trouble with Massachusetts led to its being the first upon whom the theories of alteration by British initiative were tried. A strong case might be made for the contention that British desires for alterations

¹[Maurice Morgann] to [Shelburne] [1763], WLCL, Shelburne Papers, LXXXV: 26 ff., p. 31.

²December 14, 1765, op. cit. (1774), p. 40.

³Grenville Papers, IV, 298.

would have slumbered on for some time had not the Stamp Act and subsequent matters forced the issue into the foreground. On the other hand, it may be argued that the fears of "new-modelling" caused much of the colonial discontent and disturbance. At all events, the alterations attempted on the relation between the colonies and the mother-country were significant. If predicted before, they were none the less innovations when undertaken in practice.

Troops were stationed in the old colonies after 1763 for the first time on a large scale during peace. The purpose was defense although some officials and memorialists thought they should also be used to "awe" the colonists. After colonial disobedience in 1765, the desire to use the military arm as a police power was naturally increased. Gage expressed his wish for a "pretence" to move troops to the Eastern coast as early as January 16, 1766.¹ Barrington's famous plan of the following spring recommended concentration of troops within sailing distance of the colonial centers and intimated that this would produce an "Effect" on American "Minds."² The "awing" policy was followed in 1768 and after in Boston. Did such a policy stimulate colonial discontent or did colonial discontent stimulate Britain to use the measure simply to nip the spirit of independence in the bud? Probably something of each of these trends existed. Some persons recommended such a policy before colonial disobedience; but it is likely that only the fears of colonial independence, as voiced by the Bernards and the Gages, persuaded the ministries to risk the experiment. An agency which had begun with little foresight of colonial control thus grew into a quasi-viceregal organization in practical operation. That this was a significant change and had serious consequences is true. But it was probably not a major feature of the program which British officials intended for America in the years beginning with 1763.

The desire to maintain or to strengthen economic control over the colonies played some part in nearly every program devised for America in 1760-75. Was there a change of policy in this

¹Gage to Barrington, January 16, 1766, The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage, ed. Clarence E. Carter (2 vols.; New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1931-33), I, 334.

²The Barrington plan, WLCL, Shelburne Papers, L: 45-64, p. 62.

feature of the colonial system? Probably not; the enforcement of commercial laws was generally similar in this period to previous practice. The outstanding exception was in the case of the Grenville program. Viewed from the perspective of the present, it can be seen that the quarrel over the Grenville measures represented the cleavage between West Indian and North American interests and between the strict theory of mercantile policy and the more liberal interpretation of Britain's own recent practice. It would be as reasonable to accuse the friends of North America with economic heresy for violating the letter as to say that Grenville was violating the spirit of the Navigation Acts. Probably neither side intended a departure from the standards of a system which they still accepted as time-honored and beyond questioning. In this sphere, therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that there was continuity rather than innovation.

In the matter of revenue taxation, the conclusion of this study is quite different. This was a real factor in British policy throughout the years 1763-76. Proposals for many kinds of revenue measures were made in 1763-65; these included quit rents, trade taxes, fur trade taxes, a loan office tax, and the direct internal taxation such as was attempted. The Grenville ministry was associated with the most startling proposition for exerting the taxing power. However, the repealers of the Stamp Act passed an important revenue law; Dowdeswell, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, later said the molasses duty was "meant now to be really collected, and to say the truth for revenue not for commerce, for it is now laid general on British as well as on French produce."¹ In the Chatham ministry's regime, there were two important taxation programs: Townshend's which was enacted and Shelburne's quit rent scheme which was unsuccessful. When the Townshend program failed, the tea tax was kept and brought in some revenue as well as kept a controversy alive. Even on the eve of revolt, a major factor in the British plan for peace was the insistence on the "lump sum" type of tax. Although it became less and less a matter of actual revenue and more a principle at stake, the desire for taxes imposed by British authority was not renounced until the Carlisle peace commission in 1778.

¹Dowdeswell to Rockingham, August 14, 1768, WLCL, Dowdeswell Papers.

Taxation for revenue was inconsistent with the old colonial policy. Those who held any form of the money delusion were for that reason determined not to approve of any program to take a "barren sum" of colonial money at the risk of disrupting the colonial economic order and stimulating colonial manufacturing and foreign trade. To plead that taxation was caused by a temporary emergency and that it would not be diverted to other than imperial uses would be to go directly counter to the evidence of British practice. For example, the West Indian 4.5 per cent duty had been first levied for defense but was appropriated to other purposes. There was a shift from the defense to the civil list principle within two years after 1765. Whether or not imperial taxation was justified legally or was included within a broad interpretation of the old principles does not alter the conclusion that its practice was a major innovation and that it would have materially altered the system by which Britain had long ruled America.

It will be observed that in the conclusions reached in these individual aspects of colonial policy about equal numbers of them are believed to show continuity and innovation tendencies. This is suggestive of the complexity of the problem and the impossibility of arriving at a simple categorical conclusion as to the nature of British policy. All the features discussed, however, show that there was a trend towards greater integration of the empire and its control.

Summary

Two major theories as to the character of British colonial policy in 1763-76 have been presented in this study. It is true that there was much shallowness and exaggeration in the contemporary dispute between their respective advocates. Those who disapproved of a measure thought that the best attack upon it was to cry that it was an "innovation" in principle and practice. On the other hand, it was said that any measure which the colonists and their friends did not like was wrung from a kind government by the conduct of the Americans themselves. But because exaggerations were indulged in it should not necessarily be concluded that the two parties spoke from no fundamental political and economic platforms at all. The fact that "wets" and "drys" respectively exaggerate the evils of prohibition and of liquor does not prove the

lack of real differences of opinion. The same seems true of the days before the outbreak of the American revolt.

The interpretation of British colonial policy drawn from the rival contentions of continuity and innovation propagandists and the detailed study of aspects of the "new" regime is that the effort to integrate the control of the empire and to subordinate all other matters to that end was the underlying theme in British policy between 1763 and 1776. This movement for integration, coupled with a process of accretion of policy in which new features were added to the old, gives some unity to the many lines of colonial policy pursued in these years. For this reason, it is concluded that the innovation theory in a moderate form is the more nearly correct explanation of what occurred.

Britons found themselves in possession of an enlarged but loosely governed American empire in 1763. While the desire for security rather than a change of standards as to colonial values determined Britain to choose North American acquisitions, the fact that the empire was so much larger helped to stimulate a greater interest in its government and defense. The old practices would serve no longer. Whether consciously realized or not, the trend after 1763 was in the direction of an integrated control. Elements in the old usages which had been fairly successful in their respective fields would be preserved and improved for the general purpose of effective administration. For example, such features of the old policy as commercial control remained and efforts were made to strengthen them; there seems to be little validity in attempts to prove that changes in fundamental policy occurred in these lines of policy. However, while the old economic control was retained, it was no longer to serve as the major link in the connection between the colonies and Britain. An effort was made to slough off weak and indecisive features of former colonial practices, especially in the field of central supervision, and to replace them with more effective methods.

Stronger imperial machinery was adopted for the control of both old and new colonies. Unorganized territory was made into an imperial domain and its control taken from the old colonies; a military control and a bureaucracy for Indian affairs was created for the new acquisitions. Peace time defense became a matter of greater concern for the general government. Revenue taxation was added to colonial policy to provide for the new defense program.

It was also desired to attain several other ideals for colonial reformation. As soon as British authority was challenged, the demand to limit the powers of the assemblies, to free royal officials from popular control, and to alter colonial charters became more insistent. The underlying trend in all this was toward the more thorough integration of the empire for purposes of commerce, power, and revenue.

It may well be suggested that many of the objectives and methods pursued after 1763 had been predicted or desired by Britons for over a half century. This is true but there would seem to be an essential difference between individuals wanting a given feature of policy and a government taking steps actually to secure it. It may also be well reasoned that it is impossible to know just what was the British policy of 1763 and what it would have developed into if not disrupted in 1765. Colonial disobedience increased bitterness, diverted attention to subordinate features of policy, and perhaps caused some policies which are sometimes associated with the new program of 1763. Such a contention deserves consideration; it is, of course, impossible to know what British colonial policy "might have been" without American disobedience and the frustration of the possibly beneficent projects of the ministry of 1763-65. But a determination to secure reformation of the colonial system had been manifested before the Stamp Act met with colonial resistance. There is another phase to the rather fruitless "might have been" speculation. It may be contended that, in spite of the cries of the colonists and their friends of an "arbitrary" system, a plan of "enslavement," and taxation beyond reason, the changes which were really adopted in 1763-76 were quite modest. It must readily be agreed that the actuality did not equal the pictures conjured up by the propagandists. However, it might be as reasonably contended that it was not because of lack of purpose or determination that there was such a paucity of British accomplishments in the field of reform. Just as the British hoped to "nip in the bud" the manifestations of American disobedience, so the colonials were determined to "nip in the bud" those features of British policy which they disliked or feared. It may perhaps be reasoned that American resistance prevented the full exhibition of what "might have been" the imperial program of integration after 1763.

At all events, what the Americans and their friends called "innovations" were new objectives and new methods added to the old colonial policy. These included the stronger machinery for imperial control of general affairs, the stronger hand taken in respect to colonial reform in government, and, especially, the addition of the program of British-imposed direct revenue taxes to the burden of the commercial system. If many of these things had been predicted in the wishful thinking of the past, they were now meant to be imposed with vigor. It may be reasonably contended that some of the "new" features existed in the theory of the old system or had been formerly voiced by visionaries; but it is believed that the altered objectives and the application of so many new practices effectually changed the policy of British colonial government at about 1763.

